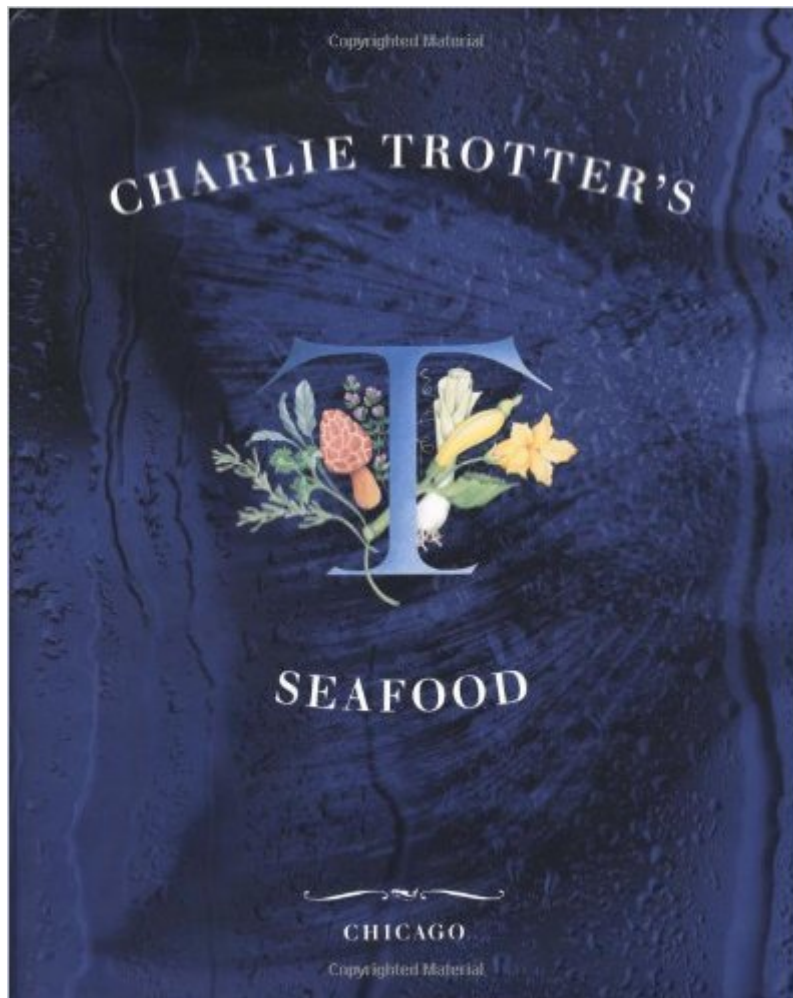


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Charlie Trotter's Seafood



Synopsis

Chef Charlie Trotter has done it again, bringing his now-classic seafood recipes—including tilapia, salmon, oysters, and shrimp—from his award-winning restaurant to your kitchen. Charlie Trotter's Chicago restaurant is praised in the food press from coast to coast. Now the master of culinary innovation tests new waters, with astonishing new dishes featuring freshwater fish and seafood. Dishes include Oxtail-Stuffed Baby Squid with Cremini Mushrooms, Mustard Oil, and Oxtail Braising Juices; Wild Striped Bass with Stinging Nettle, Wild Mushroom/Balsamic Emulsion, and Hot and Sour Golden Beet Sauce; Steamed Lake Superior Whitefish with Fiddlehead Ferns and Potato-Apple-Celery Purée; Tuna-Crab Roll; and Tuna Tartare with Avocado, Crushed Black Sesame Seed Vinaigrette, and Coriander Juice. The groundbreaking organizational structure of CHARLIE TROTTER'S SEAFOOD reflects the chef's characteristic visionary style and holistic approach to dining—the recipes are presented according to the wines with which he recommends they be served. Included are more than 100 recipes using common and exotic fish, 75 evocative duotones that convey the drama of the fishing industry and grandeur of the fish themselves, and Trotter's signature larger-than-life photos of every dish.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I am sure that Charlie Trotter makes delicious food. He probably uses exquisite ingredients, and he definitely plates the food beautifully. It might even be fun to eat at his restaurant (although I think I'd rather eat at Lutece or Le Bec-Fin). But certainly you would never want to cook from this cookbook. The food is ridiculously and unnecessarily complicated. I have nothing against difficult recipes, but Trotter's seem to be complicated only for the sake of being "original." Trotter seems to be the kind

of cook who thinks that (1) the more ingredients, the better; (2) the more exotic or unusual the ingredients, the better; and (3) all those ingredients have to be listed in the title of the dish. Braised Sesame-Crusted Yearling Sweetbreads with 100-Year-Old Balsamic Glazed Shallots, Mango-Fenugreek Mayonnaise, Herbed Polenta, and Reduction of Norwegian Sea Urchin Juices. I'm just making this up, but this "recipe" could very well be in the book. In the back of the book he has a number of recipes for "basics." This not only includes stock, vinaigrette, etc., but also Pickled Lamb's Tongues. Really. I have no problem with anybody cooking (or even pickling) lamb's tongues, but calling them a "basic" is absurd. I actually had a Charlie Trotter-style dinner this weekend. Pan-Seared Galette of Calf Force meat "En Croute" with a Chiffonade of Cornichons and Spring Greens, a Triple Reduction of Spiced Tomato Concasse, and Oil-Poached Russet Potato Allumettes. It was tasty, but it would have been just as good if I called it a hamburger with French fries. If you're thinking about buying this book, get Georges Perrier's "The Bec-Fin Recipes" instead. The food is at least as tasty (certainly more classic and harmonious), almost as beautiful, and vastly more feasible to prepare.

This is a beautiful book. The pictures are stunning and the dishes are inspiring. That said, most of the recipes are terribly complicated for the home cook. Many of the fish are hard to get and regional; most of the preparations often require things that only a restaurant kitchen can feasibly do (i.e. tomato water). Still, some of the dishes are approachable by the home cook and if you are inventive, many could inspire you to come up with your own creations. An added bonus (or potentially a distraction depending on your point of view) is that the dishes are grouped by the wines that would accompany them - a novel approach.

But I don't know why I say that...everything Charlie Trotter has done has been better than Perfect. Actually, I did find, I think 3, recipes that I probably won't try. All of the others are now on my "must make" list. Interestingly, the book chapters are named from wines, the fish & seafood aren't even named in the TOC. They are dishes to go with those wines. A couple of especially good points: every recipe has a note of Recommended Substitutions. Some of the fish will be hard to source for one who isn't a restaurateur. And the Guide to Seasonal Seafood chart near the end is invaluable. There are roughly 80ish recipes - if I start sourcing ingredients now & make one a week, it'll take me about a year & a half to cook my way through it (as I said, there are three of them I'm not going to try. Some will be more challenging than others, of course. Have absolutely no idea whatsoever where I'll get live baby eels, but that's one I'm going to have to do. Guess I'll start

looking for the frog legs. I'm having a big party in June where they'll make great hors d'oeuvres. The very first recipe is for Smelts...but they've stopped running for this season, so will have to just salivate over that while I wait for their next season. Who should buy this book? Either you're willing and able to put a lot of time and effort into sourcing ingredients and preparing them (and are capable of doing it and willing to spend the money) - or you want an elegant coffee table book. This isn't for the casual cook

The key here is you have to want to cook, not just talk the talk! Charlie's recipes are not difficult to follow. Substitutions are listed since many of the ingredients are unavailable or pricey. The recipes work well with any of the alternate ingredients and the flavors are intense. The basis are truly basis. Let's face it, pickling is just pickling. Don't be put off because he uses lambs tongue; if you do, you have missed the lesson. This a great study in culinary technique and I would use it with any beginner. It establishes such strong desires to learn and to try.

I can say that I am a reasonably competent home chef with an above-average knowledge of technique and most necessary equipment to get the job done. Having said that, I was impressed with the photos of nearly every featured recipe in this book and find the recipes to be admirably aggressive in their taste and texture contrasts. The recipes, however, are nearly all flawed in some significant manner in that following them verbatim will result in poor results. Even when this is not the case, I find these recipes to be "out of whack" from a taste perspective by any gastronome's standards and in need of serious tweaking. If you have good kitchen skills and seek to be inspired by the ideas in this book, then I would suggest it (USED!!) ... otherwise, there are much better cookbooks that will yield far superior results. I purchased the Charlie Trotter's Seafood and Dessert cookbooks and came to the same conclusion.

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